

I support the favorable consideration of Exemption #7736A Regulatory Docket # FAA-2001-11090 in the interest of public awareness, civic pride in our military services and the immediate support to our soldiers, sailors, airmen and marines currently in harm's way as we deliberate this issue.

The Army Aviation Heritage Foundation is not a "for profit" organization and was never intended to be one. It is an organization of veterans and interested citizens attempting to tell the Army Aviation story to the American Public and to bring the citizens of this nation closer to their defenders in a very special way.

There are hundreds of air shows across the nation each year. The Army Aviation heritage foundation attends possibly twelve in a year and conducts the "Friends of the Huey" Ride Programs at fewer than that. This exposure to the "for profit helicopter" operations cannot possibly be considered a threat to their profitability.

Nor does the air show circuit represent all that the Foundation does with its "Friends of the Huey" Exemption. The Foundation has extended its ability to provide historic flights to organizations such as the Vietnam Helicopter Pilots Association, Vietnam Helicopter Crew Member Association and Vietnam Veterans of America, all organizations dedicated to remembrance of the veteran.

Maintenance at the Army Aviation Heritage Foundation is on a par with the military standards which govern the program. This is accomplished in an excellent manner simply because the Foundation does not fly at the optempo of the U.S. Army but at a scheduled, maintainable and conservative schedule. And all maintenance is conducted under the supervision of appropriate FAA Certified maintenance professionals.

The aircraft are all flown by FAA Certified Commercial Pilots who maintain the same standards as do the civilian operators charging for their helicopter flying hours. Many have logged far more hours as pilot-in-command than the "for profit" operators could afford to hire.

The Foundation has been commended on many occasions for their dedication to "Safety First." The aviation safety program is based upon the Army's Safety Center Program, the best aviation safety oversight operation in the world. And it is administered by aviation safety specialists trained by the same professionals who train the military. Their safety officers include U.S. Army, U.S. Marine and ALPA trained and certified safety professionals.

If the exemption is denied, there will not be a swarm of commercial operators rushing to convert Bell 205s to resemble Vietnam Era "Hueys." A significant portion of military aviation will be lost to future generations of Americans. The B-17s, 29's and 24's are rare simply and entirely because no one cared in 1945. Thanks to the CAF, Collins and others, that was corrected before all the WW2 vintage aircraft were lost. Is that a justification for doing the same thing to the Vietnam era aircraft?

There are still too many out there so they are not vintage? What a ridiculous statement that is!

Of course they are vintage. No one in their right mind would want to go into battle in these airframes today. The fact that they are still in limited training operation is not proof of their currency but of their durability. The C-47 still flies in many areas of the world. Does that make it a "modern" aircraft?

The Army Aviation heritage Foundation provides a connection between a generation of Americans who endured a difficult and trying time during the height of the Cold War with their children and grandchildren as nothing else can. The "Friends of the Huey" Ride Program is very small, but integral none the less, part of that connection. I want my grandchildren to be able to have the same experience I had with the Vietnam era Army Aviation.

Please approve the exemption and give the public the chance to know their veterans.

